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# Economic and Social Council

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## Commission on the Status of Women

**Fifty-second session**

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Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women**

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

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## Statement submitted by Rotary International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

## Statement

Rotary's 1.2 million members in 200 countries and geographic areas are actively working to meet the goals of the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Rotary clubs worldwide develop projects that financially encourage gender equality and empower girls and women.

Rotary clubs support and empower girls and women in their communities by providing access to economic and social development through education, literacy, numeracy, information technology and job training programs. In addition, Rotary's health projects, clean water efforts, agricultural development, and other programs positively impact women worldwide. Rotary also offers equal access to its clubs, projects, youth exchange, scholarships, and group study exchange programs.

Rotary works to create a world where everyone has access to safety, economic independence and education. Rotary clubs on every continent create projects that benefit all people, especially girls and women.

Rotary clubs, as well as Rotaract (ages 18-30) and Interact (ages 14-18) clubs, in all parts of the world develop projects that promote gender equality. These projects work to provide shelter, education, and resources that enrich the lives of women and children.

For example:

- Through a US$500,000 Rotary Health, Hunger, and Humanity Grant, Rotary members launched a microcredit project in Honduras. Some 96 percent of its loans have been given to women, allowing them to start their own businesses, including a small bakery and a small company selling soy products.
- Rotary clubs in Accra-Labone, Uganda and Ojai, California, USA combined resources to create a refuge and vocational training centre for girls living on the street in Accra. They have also implemented a program to help the girls start baking or catering businesses.
- A Rotary club in India obtained a Matching Grant from The Rotary Foundation to provide wheeled carts to local widows, who often had difficulty earning an income to support themselves. These carts enabled them to sell fruit and vegetables, and crafts on the street.

These Rotary projects are among many that help to financially empower girls and women around the world.

Rotary will continue to encourage its members to develop projects to address the needs of women in their communities, and to provide women with access to education, economic and social development and healthcare. Rotary works to ensure that its programs and projects truly benefit all the world's citizens.

*Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide who provide humanitarian service, and help build goodwill and peace in the world. There are approximately 1.2 million Rotary members of more than 32,000 clubs in 200 countries and geographic areas.*